SOUVENIR

President's Inauguration

1953

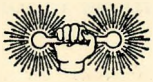
ADYAR

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

N. SRI RAM

AND OTHER SPEECHES ON FEB. 17 AND 24, 1953



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NOTE

IN this souvenir booklet are collected the speeches given on the occasion of the assumption by Mr. N. Sri Ram of the office of the President of the Theosophical Society on February 17th, 1953, and his inauguration on February 24, 1953. On the morning of 17th, the Adyar Day commemoration, Mr. C. Jinarājadāsa, declared Mr. Sri Ram elected and ushered him into the Presidentship. His announcement and the new President's acknowledgment form the first part of this compilation. Then follow the speeches given at the inaugural function held on the 24th morning in the Headquarters Hall of the Society and at the afternoon Tea Party given by the President to the Adyar Residents and Workers under the famous Banyan Tree. The frontispiece photograph relates to the function held on the 17th—Recitation of the Prayers of Religions: (1) Hinduism, (2) Buddhism, (3) Christianity; (4) Mr. Jinarājadāsa garlanding the new President Mr. N. Sri Ram on his being declared elected; (5) Mr. Jinarājadāsa handing over the ring of H. P. B.; and (6) the new President addresses the gathering.

1953 PUBLISHERS

February 17, 1953

ASSUMPTION OF PRESIDENTSHIP BY N. SRI RAM

On the morning of February 17 at the Adyar Day commemoration meeting held in the Great Hall of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, immediately after the Prayers of the Religions, the Recording Secretary reported on the results of the Presidential Election.

Mr. C. Jinarājadāsa then said:

"In accordance with the requirements of Rule 10 of the Rules and Regulations of the Theosophical Society and the results of the voting which have been checked by the Scrutineers appointed by the Executive Committee, Mr. N. Sri Ram is hereby declared President of the Theosophical Society.

"I now perform my last duty, which is to transfer to the new President this ring of H. P. B. She wore it to the end of her life, and directed that the ring should be left with Annie Besant, who wore it even before she became President, and all through her three terms as President. She left that ring in her Will to all future Presidents of the Theosophical Society. Under that Will, Dr. George Arundale wore the ring to the end of his life and term and,

similarly, I have worn it during the seven years of my term (till midnight last night). I now transfer the ring and its custody to the new President."

The new President made his acknowledgment as follows:

"Brother Raja and Friends: I am deeply sensible of the responsibility I am assuming by the choice of my fellow-members, and of the fact that I am succeeding to an office which has been held successively by the President-Founder, Dr. Annie Besant, Dr. George S. Arundale, and up to this moment by Brother Raja.

"We shall have in a few days an inaugural meeting, at which I will be able to speak at more length on the work before us. In the meanwhile, all that we can do and might do—each one of us, not only myself—is to dedicate ourselves to that work, in purest goodwill to all, with, as the sole regnant motive of our lives, the advancement and happiness of the whole of humanity, not from any outward and purely superficial point of view, but from a point of view which sees the Truth in clear separation from the false, and in a disposition of spirit which will lay ourselves open to the help and blessing of Those who are the embodiments of the highest Wisdom and Truth.

"Echoing the language of our beloved late President, Dr. Annie Besant, I would fain join you all in the prayer: May Those who are the embodiments of Love immortal bless with

Their protection—now as heretofore—the Society founded to do Their will, bestow upon us the guidance of Their immeasurable Wisdom, and inspire in each and all of us throughout the world the urge to never-failing beneficent action."

February 24, 1953

BROTHER RAJA'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

[On the occasion of the Inaugural Address of the new President, in the Headquarters Hall, at 8.00 a.m.]

My Brothers,

It gives me sincere pleasure to say a few words on this occasion. Brother Sri Ram and I have long co-operated in many types of work, long before I became President. There is hardly a single important paper, which, before sending out, I have not sent to him to see. He sees many sides of a problem, as I do not. He has often pointed out some phrase of mine which might lead to a misunderstanding. Not infrequently also I have sent him " On the Watch-Tower " notes, similarly to check on my phrasing.

Each President of the Theosophical Society makes his own contribution. Colonel Olcott was not a great exponent of Theosophical ideas, except that of Brotherhood, and he lived that in practice. But among his contributions is this magnificent Hall.

He beautified the Headquarters estate with three ornamental gateways constructed from pillars of Hindu temples—the first and largest, with one pedestal carved with the initials H.S.O., and the

other, H.P.B. The second gateway was given by Prince Harisinghji Rupsinghji of Bhavnagar, and bears his wife's name carved on the top crosspiece. The third is carved with the name Vasantapuram on one side, and on the other with the name of the donor, José Xifre, a well-known member in Spain.

As to Dr. Annie Besant, who shall assess her work? Her many books give us various aspects of the great teachings. But there will not be another with the same ability of oratorical exposition. It was in the great lectures at Queen's Hall in London that one heard her in her full vigour. If you analyse any of those lectures, you will find headings, sub-headings, sub-sub-headings, absolutely in what may be called a scientific and professorial scheme. Yet towards the end of each lecture, in her presentation, she gave a vision to all her audience almost from the Buddhic plane.

Dr. Arundale's contribution was something vibrant. He was full of friendship, radiating it to all and not excluding even those who were critical of him. There is not a single work of his that was not charged with enthusiasm.

Regarding myself, I suppose presently somebody will sum up the quality of my work. But I always treasure a little compliment made years ago after a talk to members in England, when a little elderly lady came up to me and said, " Thank you for being *human.*"

As to Brother Sri Ram, he has a quality that I have not—a very lofty philosophical understanding and exposition, and we shall see that more and more

as he gives his message. He is especially characterized by possessing the attribute which I shall call " wise ".

I said in my last Presidential Address, looking back on the long years I have been in the Society, that all is well with the Society, splendidly well. Now, looking into the future I can say, all will be well, splendidly well, under the leadership of President Sri Ram.

[President Sri Ram then delivered his Inaugural Address.]

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT N. SRI RAM

I DEEPLY appreciate all the affection and the trust which have been displayed towards me in messages from members in so many countries of the world. I treasure their goodwill and sympathy. But I remember, and I think it is well for everyone to remember, that it is always more blessed to give than to receive. One can receive many presents, much affection, praise, support, all kinds of things which we consider good in the worldly view. But to receive all this is as nothing compared to the giving of something from one's own heart, and what one possesses, to another who is in need.

The President is he who should serve best. Whether such service will be rendered by me is another matter. I want on this occasion to greet you all, each one, with brotherly affection, and from this place, all members everywhere throughout the world.

I have said on other occasions but would like to say again that if such an organization as the Theosophical Society, engirdling the globe and composed of men and women of every race, religion and nationality,

all devoted to the very highest aims in life, were not in existence, it would have to be created. The Society is an organization which is as broad-based as it is noble in structure, with a breadth of Brotherhood that excludes none, but includes all men and women, nay all lives, and an aim that reaches up to the summit of human perceptions and aspirations. This Brotherhood, which is irrespective of every difference of creed, race, sex or colour, is the only creed, if creed you call it, demanded of a Theosophist, who is otherwise as free as, nay, more free than most men who are bound by various allegiances, to come to his own individual convictions. Besides this Brotherhood, all that is asked of a Theosophist, by the three Objects to which he subscribes, is the desirability of the comparative study of science, religion and philosophy—all science, all religion, and all philosophy—and the investigation of those powers which are latent in man, and of the laws of Nature which are still unknown and unexplained.

Even the word "Theosophy" does not find a place in the wording of the Objects. We are called, or call ourselves, Theosophists only because we belong to the Theosophical Society. The aim of Theosophy is implicit in the title, "The Theosophical Society," and although the word has obviously a certain transcendental connotation, lending itself to such translations as the Divine Wisdom, the Wisdom of God or wisdom concerning God, the meaning of that word and what it implies have never been specifically

defined by the Society. By legitimate inference we may be held to assume that there is a Truth, a superior Wisdom, to be had by such men and women as ourselves, and it is for us to discover it. For some, of course, it is more than a mere intellectual thesis. For they have in them a deep intuition as to such knowledge, a knowledge as good as any other knowledge, which is as much a knowledge of themselves as a knowledge of things perceived in relation to the self. It is of this integrated knowledge that we may say that all external knowledge is but a detailed reminiscence.

I believe that the Freedom which we claim and need to exercise is the very breath of that Spirit which each man is inwardly, and that there is no seeking possible except in the purity and expansiveness of that freedom. We all possess, even the prisoner in his prison, a certain relative freedom, but we can never rest there. The whole cycle and adventure of human existence is in a sense a search for something which is an absolute, which is as much absolute freedom as absolute anything else, a search for the freedom which was lost in the beginning, and is regained in the end.

Our progress, therefore, whether as individuals or as any society, lies on the one side in the progress of thought and action to the perfection which is its goal, and on the other, in a more inward view, it lies in an expanding freedom from every psychic and external fetter. In this inner freedom alone is true happiness ;

I believe that in it is the secret of self-origination, of self-discovery and self-realization.

The Brotherhood we proclaim, and seek to realize in our lives, is not a dogma incompatible with freedom. Nay, more positively, it can be stated that there can be freedom for the soul only in a state of harmony realized through Brotherhood, which is the only true, pure, free and balanced relationship in life. The foundation of every metaphysical philosophy, if it is to be a structure of truth based on experience and not mere fantasy and vain speculation, must be laid in a mode of living, a way of looking at all life, and a behaviour, to which the term Brotherhood may be truthfully applied.

Therefore, if our Society is to be a truly Theosophical Society, and to progress and fulfil its mission, it must embody a mode of living on the part of its members, in which there is an ever-deepening realization of brotherhood, and, as an open sky stretching over the earth, an ever-widening horizon of thought, bringing ever-new intimations to the human spirit. Our freedom, which spells this openness, and our Brotherhood need to be interpreted, not superficially in any spirit of self-satisfaction and complacency, but as aspects of a dynamic Truth which we are seeking to probe, the Truth which inexorably guides the revolution of life.

If our Society and its Lodges are ever to become mere respectable clubs for the practice of social affability, though I do not decry the value of any such

club, they will fail of their dynamic purpose. Nor will the purpose be any the better served by intellectual disquisitions and formal argument. One of those Beings, to whom we refer as the Adepts or the Masters of the Wisdom, was reported in the early days of the Society to have commented on the uncertainties of its aims at that time: "Rather perish the T. S. with both its hapless founders than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic, a hall of occultism." Not that there is no true magic or Occultism in Nature. For, what is magic but the production of effects, by means with which the vast majority are still unacquainted, and Occultism but the study of those inner extensions, the hidden laws and forces, that lie behind the screen of their outer effects?

But what we have to realize profoundly in our Society is that all our studies, deep and superficial, whether through books or by direct and personal experience in any form, cannot be divorced from living. As both life and thought reach back to the same origins, it has been said of old in India, and again during the lifetime of the Society by the Adepts who were connected with it: Live the life and you will know the Truth, which is the same as the Christian saying: He who doeth the will of the Lord shall know of the doctrine. As the Truth, the integrated knowledge, to which I referred in the beginning, lies within and not without us, it needs but to be uncovered by a mode of life which permits its rays to spread out.

What is Truth? Every formulation by a pure consciousness which is in harmony with its own nature is a truth. Such truth is more than mere mental coinage. It is a creation of the Spirit which embodies a portion of its life. The Society, if it is to lift the world from its present plight and help to bring about the great changes that are needed, must be a channel of that life.

The Society was launched into existence at a time when human thought and interest seemed to be heading towards deeper levels of materialism, and the course of human history was inexorably making for that revolution which this century has been witnessing in an increasing measure. I believe that amidst this revolutionary change it was planned to spread a spiritual leaven, the effect of which would be both to transform human thought and unify mankind. As even in the very early days of the Society, its leading members—Mr. Sinnett, for instance, not to speak of H. P. B.—saw "the large purpose" behind the then small movement—I am not perhaps merely reading that purpose into the events that have happened. I do not claim that the Society is the sole instrument or medium for the change that was to be effected. Also, Theosophy being in essence and in its ultimate totality not a dogma but a life, there may be many in the world who are true Theosophists without ever having come across the word "Theosophy," just as there may be many members of the Society, attracted in some manner to it, who are yet to become Theosophists.

If the Society has progressed thus far and made some mark on the mentality of the times, I would attribute this achievement as much to the lives of those who have lived Theosophy—the great leaders, such as H. P. B., Colonel Olcott, Dr. Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater, as well as others, including very many who have silently played their parts in their respective places—as to the force of the ideas promulgated, which being true, have made their way solely by virtue of that truth. Life is action, and thought is action, as much as any overt public deed or achievement, though it may be that some of our thoughts fall short of the true purpose of action, which is to unfold the latent harmony of life.

Our duty is therefore to act and make Theosophy practical, but in no narrow sense. The unity that binds life in all its manifestations makes it vain to separate the theoretical from the practical, that is, if the theory is true. There is nothing so subjective but has an objective expression and effect. A man's thoughts—I include his feelings, of course—at least mould his countenance to some extent and surely make themselves felt in his behaviour. But I do not think that the Society *as such* should commit itself to particular courses of action in the external world, not only because of the differences of opinion which all such actions are calculated to provoke, but also because the manner of expression of every truth tends to limit that truth, and, when well established, to check the possibility of expression in other forms and of

other truths. There is a grain of truth in most things sincerely believed in, even when they express contradictory ideas.

Hence, a true Theosophist is limited by no label, no party, no denomination. His is an outlook which seeks ever to synthesize all that is true, good and beautiful, which synthesis cannot but be an expression of the unity that underlies them all. There is no such thing as Theosophy here and truth there, with a possibility of conflict between them, wherever the truth may come from. Theosophy *is* truth, and all truth is necessarily part of it. But the Truth which belongs to the essence of things, and is not a mere projection of the mind, is a truth that is inseparable from its effect and action. Theosophy is therefore Wisdom in action, and he who would be a true Theosophist is he who is wise in life and action.

The present is especially a time which forces us all to be more than ever conscious of that primary ignorance, or *Avidya* as it is called in Samskrit, which seems to wax with the increase of material knowledge. Seeing the human mind in engagement with the world of matter, we may note both its triumphs and its limitations. Man needs to discover, besides the increasing diversity at the physical and sensational levels, fostered by a limited, earth-bound mind, the nature of the unity by which alone these diversities can be moulded into a form consonant with his own true nature. In that unity, which is not a mere number, not an abstraction without significance to our

lives, must lie both the aim and motive power of our efforts.

I referred at the beginning to the fact that the Society stands for a joining together of all men and women on the broadest possible basis. If it is a union of hearts born out of the free will inherent in them, it must inevitably find its expression and achieve a basis in the practical organization of mankind on unitary, yet free and autonomous lines. We can see a definite move in that direction in the U. N. and other forms of international co-operation. But along with this union in the world of practical affairs, and as a parallel to it in the world of thought, the integration of all available knowledge, there must be a reaching upward of the soul of man, stripped of every encumbrance and released from every fetter, towards that Truth which is one and universal, yet is in the heart of every man. The One exists, the many change and pass; the Truth is one or there is but the One, the learned speak of it many-wise. I am combining some famous lines of an English poet with some ancient words from Samskrit. It is the form which that Unity takes which we speak of as Theosophy or the Divine Wisdom.

Our task as Theosophists, along with all others who are either naturally idealistic or are moved to be so by the necessities of their knowledge and experience, is to lead the world to a new age beyond the mind which, despite its triumphs, sees and reasons but superficially. I believe the world is set for the

growth of a new civilization, nurtured and fed on a fresh harvest from the best seeds of existing cultures, a civilization in which all that is best in the East and the West will be fused into a spiritual cum practical unity. Our duty is to work for a new order in which all things will be different from what they are, will have a different purpose and a different beauty, because each man will in some degree have then realized his kinship and duty towards all other men, nay towards all life, including our younger brethren, the animals. When that day dawns—we seem to see its glimmer on the far horizon a little more than the early leaders of the Society—it will make possible the evolution of a new humanity exercising a pure Intuition, in addition to a pure mind, making all things beautiful as well as good. We have to make these great possibilities come true, by illustrating, each one of us where he is, a new way of life, which will be a way of love and wisdom. In so far as we negate whatever evil, whatever wrongness, whatever superstition, there is in our habitual modes of living—in our thoughts and our relations with others—we will be releasing a positive good. So the way is open for each one to tread ; for it lies at his feet.

Each one of us counts, and not only the leaders. Each can be in himself a well of pure inspiration. Each can gladden and purify the earth where he is. Each can shine as a star of righteousness in his celestial latitude and longitude, however dim the vision of others towards its light. I cannot conceive

of a greater destiny for this Society than to be transformed into a body of men and women, who live and labour to such a glorious end. It is a great superstition to think that he who makes a fuss, a great disturbance, achieves more than he who is quiet and humble, that the limelight is preferable to the darkness; it is in darkness that we perceive the heavenly lights. Each has his part in the work, and none is really afore or after the other, in true importance, respect-worthiness or indispensability.

As an organization, all of us concerned with it have to be constantly on guard against that universal fate of decline, the process of entropy, to which every system or organization seems to be subject. We must set a tone and quality, a standard ahead of the standards of the world in everything that we do, through everything we express, be it the work of lecturing, Lodge discussions, the business of Lodge affairs, the conduct of elections, or the very appearance of the Lodge-room, the beauty and order that should characterize its appointments. It is idle to imagine that we can be slack and disorderly in relation to external matters, in our traffic with the not-Self, and attain to that self-mastery and perfect order that belong to the inner soul or Self. As has been said by our great Founder, H. P. B. (I am adapting her words): It is in the right perception of things objective, and the right handling of them, that we shall discover that sole Reality which is ever subjective.

As to the future of the Society, though we may plan our work and must plan with an eye to that future, it is best assured by our concerning ourselves with the very best we can do in the present. It is by what we do now that we determine what is to come. Each will fare inevitably according to his deserts, whether individual, group, society, nation, or even the whole of humanity. If we deserve great leaders, we shall have them. If we prepare for a fresh spiritual influx from those heights to which we are able to look up, such an influx must surely come. Let us resolve, each on his own account, to do the best he can in the tasks committed to our hands.

May Those who are the great Guides and Guardians of Humanity, the Masters of the Wisdom, the Adepts, the Rishis, find in us a willing and pliable instrument for Their purposes, and give us that benediction and help by which we will be able to achieve all things that it is necessary to achieve. In India we end every good undertaking with the chant, Peace to all beings. Perhaps I might on this occasion end with the words: Peace and goodwill to all beings.

FELICITATION

BY SIDNEY A. COOK

Vice-President

[At the Tea Party under the Banyan Tree at 4-30 p.m.]

I AM asked by certain members of the staff here at Adyar first to tell you, Brother Sri Ram, that though they are much too near to send messages in letter or telegraphic form, they nevertheless express and feel towards the new President, the same sentiments of affection and loyalty as are contained in the many written messages that have been received from places near and far throughout the world.

This must for all of us be a very happy occasion, that in this theosophically historical spot we should have this opportunity of informal contact in such numbers to honour our new President.

There has been a break from tradition in that the presidency has passed to a successor during a president's lifetime. Much as we have enjoyed our work and association with Brother Raja, this is a good precedent, and we should be grateful to him for showing us this way of changing presidents. We have

never in the previous history of the Society had the good fortune to have a President and a President-Emeritus or a past President together. In this respect this is a unique occasion. Nothing outside our three Objects should become immovable and fixed for us. We must not be alarmed, therefore, by innovations. Change in the direction of progress and freedom should be welcome among us.

When I asked Brother Sri Ram if there were to be any talks here today he said: "You may speak if you like." One of my reasons for speaking is that if someone does not offer some remarks, Brother Sri Ram will not have occasion to speak in response. I am therefore doing this not only to accord him the honour due to him, but in order that he also may speak to us.

The Society as you know is made up of autonomous Sections. These Sections are composed of autonomous Lodges; and the Lodges in turn are groups of autonomous individuals. Members are mentally autonomous in that they have complete freedom to do and think as they will within the bounds of the three stated Objects—free in thought and in outlook, with no restrictions whatsoever. Such is the organization of which Brother Sri Ram is now the elected head. It is a difficult position to fill because of this autonomy and freedom. Yet these must be preserved.

Members come freely into the Society with their various temperaments and for all kinds of reasons.

Very many of them, I think, come because they have some sense of the greatness of the Founders. Though many do not fully understand, what they know of the Society causes them to realize that there stands behind it an influence they do not yet know. Some come into the Society because of the concept of the oneness of life and they there touch the idea of the brotherhood of humanity, which awakens a divine response in their hearts. They come into the Society because it presents to them a clarifying philosophy, explaining to them much that would otherwise be inexplicable, that would remain a mystery. They acquire some deepening of understanding through the philosophy of Theosophy. And some enter the Theosophical Society because through acquiring a wider knowledge of the religions they sense a greater purpose and value in their own; the comparative study affords an enlarged outlook. They come for these and many other reasons, and we cannot create a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood unless all are welcome and included.

This very variety creates differences and difficulties, for people *are* deeply different, not only obviously different as they sit side by side at the same table. It is a mark of the wisdom of the Founders and of the early workers that they built into the physical and moral framework of the Society two elements of very great importance. The first of these is the great ideal of Brotherhood, and the second the great ideal of Freedom, and therefore of respect for the

differences between others and ourselves ; respect for those who differ from us but with whom we hold in common the sense of unity and with it the idea of a freedom of selfhood, together permitting all differences to be blended into harmony. The Founders must have realized that there would be differences so to be blended. We have been told of present differences in various countries, in various places in the Theosophical Society. Each difference with another, however, can be merged in the light of these two great principles of brotherhood and freedom. We recognize that each must see with his own eyes and must tread his own way, with his own distinctiveness and yet with his unity with all. This is of the very essence of our Theosophical effort.

It is quite easy, and perhaps natural, to regard the people who are not quite so co-operative with us as odd. If we carry the idea further, those who are harmonious with us are the even. Now if we simply add odd and even numbers we still get always odd, but if we multiply the odd by the even, if we really integrate them, we inevitably achieve the even, the harmony. By mere addition we continue difference and possibly disharmony. Our differences are not to divide us ; they are not merely for addition ; they are for multiplication of our powers so that we bring together our respective ideas and opinions and blend and integrate them into strength.

And Brother Sri Ram of all people is supremely able to bring about such a result where differences exist

in the Theosophical Society. There are bound, by the very nature of man, to be such differences. That is a simple statement of fact. Brother Sri Ram, I believe, will take these differences and build of them a stronger Society. Someone wrote to me recently that the full nature of the Presidency is not known to members. "The members understand that a function of the President is to inspire." We here know it is more than that. "Our President has to be a source of leadership and inspiration, the final court of appeal within the Society in matters relating to rules and administration, and has to undertake heavy responsibilities for the very intricate administration"—intricate because of the differences of temperament that exist everywhere throughout the whole world.

In the matter of Section differences, I am sure that Brother Sri Ram, respecting the freedom and the autonomy of the Sections, will help them to find new and constructive approaches to the solutions of their problems. Difficult as it may be, I feel we may expect a grand harmony gradually to develop in the course of the next few years.

We know Brother Sri Ram as a lecturer, as an author; we know his magnificent command of the English language. We know him for his cogent and philosophical mind. We know he has filled administrative positions. We know him as a Theosophist. There is a quotation which has sometimes been called to our attention, the admonition that we should popularize Theosophy. The correct quotation is that

we should popularize a *knowledge of* Theosophy. How can we popularize what we do not know? Again, Brother Sri Ram is pre-eminently the exponent, the teacher, a Theosophist who can spread the divine *knowledge.*

We know him, some of us, as a journalist, and he has always continued as a journalist in that he has kept his mind in touch with the moving thought of the world. A world experience is his in a real sense. By the way in which he has thus kept himself in touch he will bring great thought to bear and skill in handling the international affairs of the Society.

As to Adyar, I like to think of the Adyar administration as a very fine watch. You open a watch and see that it has all kinds of parts, of different shapes and purposes, each fulfilling its own function but all in co-operation. All the wheels are integrated; they are not all individually turning in the same direction. Related wheels looked at from one point of view are turning from each other; from another they are turning the one to the other. All these differences are necessary and often only seeming. This integration is typical of something in the Theosophical Society. Listening closely you may hear the ticking and be concerned, but the Adyar organization, working together, moving in right relationship as do the parts within a watch, is a fine instrument for the President to guide to supreme usefulness in his great task in the seven years to come.

This morning you listened to a stream of congratulations and good wishes and expressions of affection and loyalty, and we here no less, in close association with him, extend our good wishes and a full measure of our capacity to work with our Brother Sri Ram.

We know him by his life. He may have had other lives but he has never told me. If he knows of them he will probably never tell. It is by *this* life and what happens now that we know him. He has attained to this position of dominance by his gentleness, not by domination. He knows the subtle difference between domination and dominance, for the truest thing I can say of him is that he is without ability to create fear. Yet I know with all his gentleness he has power to stand impersonally firm where he feels that there is something sound, something right to be sustained. You can count on him in that respect.

He has been elected by the will of the members. I am sure that it is not only by their will, but by the great Will which we all endeavour to serve that he has come to be the President of the Theosophical Society.

[The President then addressed the gathering.]

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

THE Vice-President, Mr. Sidney A. Cook, has by his remarks made inevitable a speech from me! He has referred to the good wishes of all the people present here, and to the support I will have, as President, from the various members of the staff. Of course I know I have your good wishes, and I esteem them greatly. Let me say I can sense the abundance of goodwill and affection with which I am surrounded. It is but very natural and very right that when a person is called to a heavy responsibility, those who are around him and assist him in discharging it should give him of their goodwill and support. What is natural is taking place. But it is also natural to be grateful, and I am profoundly grateful to each and every one who joins in the atmosphere of this occasion. Some do so, I know, from afar in different parts of the world. It helps me to feel that whatever we may achieve will be achieved by us together.

I believe that everyone, however humble, must be enabled to have his part in matters which he can understand. There may be, for instance, a peon or

messenger in a big and important business organization. Even he is capable of making suggestions in regard to some of the matters of that office, in the arrangement of furniture, for instance. True co-operation requires the help and assistance of each and every one in his measure, whether he has a post which is regarded as high or a post which is thought of as low. When the great city of the Manu was built in Central Asia, the Manu who was the Head of the whole enterprise, would pause sometimes in His rounds—so we are told—to talk to a humble sweeper of the streets and enquire into his problems. There was an example of true equality—equality at heart—between the truly great, not merely persons ostensibly so, and others much humbler in knowledge, virtue and capacity.

We meet in a very beautiful place, under the famous Banyan Tree. As we look on every side we see trees, the amphitheatre, the river, the waves and the sea that lie beyond, and the clear open sky. There cannot be a more delightful spot for us to meet frequently and exchange counsel, as I hope we will do.

Mr. Cook referred to the fact that in our Soeiety, as in every other important organization, there are bound to be strong differences of opinion, different ways of looking at things, different temperaments. I always feel that these differences are not something to be apologetic about, to be explained away, but are of fundamental value. If there are two ways in which two people sincerely look at a thing, each way has something good, each opinion surely has some merit in

it. If only we can put aside that opinionatedness with which each one of us is so afflicted, if we can keep ourselves open, we will be able to enter into the thought and the standpoint of the other person, and we will find that all the differences are resolved by a certain silent process of absorbing them without any particular effort on our part. An integration takes place inwardly in some deep recess of our nature. We merely extend to the other person the benefit of our attention, our consideration of what he has to say, without any reserve; we try to understand him—which does not necessarily mean agree—and to enter into his standpoint. We will find, then, that we have taken into ourselves what he has really to give, and also that all these different views are in some mysterious way mingled, so that what comes out is a view which seems to meet all just requirements.

The Vice-President spoke of the possibility of a grand harmony in the Society, which does not mean that we should do away with differences. Yes, do away with differences of personality, striving for position and honours, insistence on one's own view because it is one's view—these differences are only hindrances to real understanding and action. But any difference which is sincere, which is rooted in some deeply-felt principle, is a difference to be valued, accepted and made use of. Your view is theoretically as good as mine on any matter equally within our comprehension; mine is not necessarily superior, even if it prevails. But that is not the way people

ordinarily look at differences of opinion, and that is why it is so difficult for people to work together.

I feel it is a very great training that is offered to us, to work together in spite of differences. If we can put aside our personal ambitions, our insistence on what we personally want irrespective of what others want, there will be no difficulty in coming to a beautiful understanding amongst ourselves. It does not matter what each thinks ; the value in his view is something to be taken into consideration.

The Theosophical Society can be an organization in which there are many views, many standpoints, many philosophies even. It can be like a wonderful banyan tree, the main trunk of which is at Adyar, but which throws down rootlets and stems in different parts of the world, each representing a school of thought or a certain mode of activity. All of them would be from one tree, fed from the same parent-root, a tree under the shade of which those who are in affliction and weary may rejoice to shelter for a while. Why should not our Society be like that banyan tree ? It can evolve into such an organization if we desire it to be so.

The Society is even already a unique organization. There are so many National Societies, each autonomous. Each Lodge, each member is autonomous—or should be. There is freedom for each and all, and there ought to be also a complete openness of mind. But how are all these Sections held together ? Not by rules and constitution. What is to prevent their

breaking away and declaring their independence, as did the various parts of Alexander's empire after he passed away? The only thing that holds together the different parts of this world-wide organization is the life that flows through the Society, the response which members all over the world make freely and continuously to the leadership which flows from Adyar. We cannot coerce any National Society to remain within the international organization, but they do so because they want to remain, are eager to do so, because they regard Adyar as the head and fount of their Theosophical inspiration. The future of the Society depends, then, on the continual and increasing flow of life from whatever be the source from which the life issues.

Is it not also remarkable that nowhere has Theosophy been specifically defined in our Society? There is *a* Theosophy, which we seek to promulgate, to understand, and perhaps to discover. But there is no official document, no paper or statement which says it shall mean this, that or the other. If the aim is so open and if each one may proceed towards it in his own way, what is there to prevent all the members from drifting in different directions, each along his own pathway, so that they soon separate and there is no possibility of concerted action? What holds the minds of all the members to what we call Theosophy?

There are certain truths, there is a certain outlook, a plan, which is embodied in our literature, which has been published and sent from Adyar. But

these ideas have made their way into the world. They have been proclaimed and those who have responded to it have accepted the truth. Theosophy has made its way not because it has been imposed nor because of any promises of gain that have been held out. If we try to spread Theosophy by appealing to motives of self-interest and gain—subtle or gross—surely it will not be Theosophy at all and we cannot expect the message to ring true to its purpose. Truth is always propagated by its own force, by the free and voluntary response of those who read or listen to the particular truth. In that way we have a certain set of ideas, a body of truths, a philosophy, which is accepted by tens of thousands of members of the Society and by many outside the Society. All that has been accepted in freedom, for there is no imposition upon anybody by any authority.

I am not unconscious of the difficulties of our task, of the fact that there is a great deal to be done, that we must have changes—first of all, in ourselves—that we must look into things deeply and not superficially, that we have yet to make Theosophy a living revolutionary power in our lives. At the same time, I can honestly express the opinion that here is an organization which has great potentialities. When we think of the Theosophical Society, we have to think not only of what it has achieved and is today, but also of what we can make of it if we take hold of it rightly.

How can we transform the minds of the members, what kind of an organization can the Society become

twenty, thirty, fifty years hence? Is that not also an approach of great importance, to determine what possibilities there are in the movement as it is, in spite of every shortcoming, every weakness it may at present exhibit? Into what sort of an instrument can we turn it? How can we make the Society more wonderful and effective for its purpose than it has ever been? There is a possibility. It is for you and me to realize it. Whether we shall rise to the occasion, become channels for the flowing stream, transform the hearts of people and life everywhere is a big question-mark. We cannot answer that question now, even if we would. If we answer it in the affirmative now, that answer is of no value. We have to give the answer by life, by working, and not merely by protesting and wishing that things would happen.

We need to be Theosophists of resolve and determination. If the determination is deep within our hearts and up-welling, then that determination will be able to achieve wonders. It does not need to be expressed in many words. Real resolve is not much spoken about, because resolve is part of the inner being. If a man resolves upon some action, he will proceed to *do* it, and not merely speak of doing it some time. That is what we want and need among those Theosophists who are anxious to make this Society the most wonderful instrument that it can be for the progress and happiness of humanity.

The Vice-President has spoken about various supposed virtues of mine. I will make no comment

upon them. I can take anybody in this audience whom I know and expatiate upon *his* virtues, the wonders at the roots of his being. If you are prepared to look for what is good in another, you will surely find it. It may be that some of the qualities exist, in part, in me. But everyone has his qualities, and has to make the best use of them. If we can pool them all together and try to do something vital with them, we may be able to make Adyar the Flaming Centre that our late President Dr. Annie Besant wanted it to be.

I am sure that in this task I shall have the co-operation of our Vice-President who is so devoted, so full of capacity in every way, just as I shall have that of every other person present here, Heads of Departments and other workers. I am sure we will be able to work together happily, each one bringing his own contribution, but all falling into a pattern that will help Adyar to become all that it ought to be, a model and an-example for a bright new age, a pattern of work for the benefit of humanity.

I thank you all for having come to this party, where we have been able to exchange our ideas to some extent. You may say: We have only heard you, it is you who have spoken. Nevertheless, you have had your own thoughts and feelings, and they must in some way have affected me. Even though outwardly there have been only two monologues, one by the Vice-President, and one by myself, at the deeper levels there must have been a two-way traffic.

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